

**Serious and Violent Offender ReEntry Initiative
State of New Jersey Workplan Clarifications—Adults
2002-RE-CX-0021**

DETERMINE PROBLEMS TO BE ADDRESSED

No more than 100 adult offenders will participate in this initiative. Offenders will be eligible to participate in our program based on a set of eligibility criteria described below. Adult participants will be chosen from several sources. Some eligible participants will have been sentenced under New Jersey's No Early Release Act (NERA) which requires that offenders complete their term of incarceration and then must be supervised on parole for either 3 or 5 years, depending on the nature and severity of the crime. Other eligible participants will work their way through the traditional parole process—parole release decisions will be made by the Parole Board rather than be mandated by sentence.

We have significantly modified our initiative so that instead of serving offenders in the community beginning January 1, 2003 as previously planned, we will begin implementing the institutional phase of our initiative on January 1, 2003 with release of offenders into the community commencing in October, 2003. We believe that this work plan modification is significant to the successful outcome of our plan for a variety of reasons. First, beginning a 9-month institutional component affords us the opportunity to ensure that offenders with specific needs (needs that we will determine by assessment) are placed into appropriate programs. Should offenders be incarcerated in institutions that do not offer appropriate programs, the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) has agreed to move offenders to institutions that will afford them the maximum access to programs that best fit their needs. Second, we are planning to implement the use of the LSI-R into our offender assessment process. We believe that the additional time placed into our institutional phase will allow for appropriate training, assessment, and reassessment of offenders and staff—allowing us to fine-tune the LSI and its use. Third, coalition and consensus-building continues to be a challenge for us. We believe that the additional time afforded by changing our work plan will give us the opportunity continue to build alliances and relationships with agencies/organizations at the state and local levels—further strengthening the linkages we plan to make between institutional programs and services and those programs and services offered in the community.

Our revised work plan then will implement an institutional component to begin January 1, 2003. Participants in the ReEntry initiative will be released to the community beginning October, 2003-April, 2004. All other program elements in our work plan remain the same.

Our ReEntry initiative is predicated on a carrot-and-stick approach to law enforcement and community supervision. We believe that offenders who have committed serious and violent crimes are at increased risk for returning to lives of crime or themselves being victims of crimes, once they are released from prison. Consequently, our program provides a mechanism whereby comprehensive wrap-around services are offered to those offenders who qualify for participation in the program. All offenders in the program will have the opportunity to avail themselves of these services—they will be encouraged to do so. However, they will also be warned that should they engage in criminal behavior while participating in this program, they will be dealt with swiftly and certainly; they will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

DETERMINE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Reduce re-arrest and absconder rates of participants (assessed monthly): Our initiative will have achieved some measure of success if rates of re-arrest and the number of participants who abscond is reduced. Our goal is to facilitate the successful reintegration of these offenders on a long-term basis. Fewer arrests of participants is certainly one measure of how successful or not we are at accomplishing this task.

Specific Method of Goal Measurement: Participants who may abscond while participating in the ReEntry initiative will be automatically turned over to our specialized Fugitive Unit who will give priority to these cases. Parole officers will routinely check state and local police databases to determine whether or not offenders have been rearrested. Should an offender abscond or be rearrested, the officer will intercede and take appropriate action.

Reduction in violent crime (assessed monthly): If we can achieve reduced rates of violent crime in Camden and Essex Counties committed by offenders participating in the reentry initiative, then we will have achieved some measure of success.

Specific Method of Goal Measurement: Routine record checks by parole officers of offenders participating in this initiative will reveal whether or not offenders are engaging in crime, and if so, what type of crime. Further assessment of crime rates and crime types committed in Camden and Essex Counties will provide context within which to evaluate how the initiative is working.

Offender accountability (assessed monthly): We believe that offenders must be held accountable for their actions and that increased accountability will result in more successful parole outcomes. In an effort to assess accountability, accountability sessions will take place at local churches and will be chaired by the Chairman of the Parole Board or a designated representative—usually a Board member. Parole officers, service

providers, the Chairman and parolees will participate in sessions that assess parolee participation and offer the opportunity for parolees to address grievances, questions, or comments to the Chairman personally. The emphasis will be on holding service providers and offenders accountable for delivering and participating constructively in appropriate services.

Specific Method of Goal Measurement: ReEntry program participants will be told that participation in accountability sessions is required. Parole Officers will be present at these accountability sessions and will be able to determine whether or not their clients are in attendance. Parole officers will follow up with offenders who do not attend and will take appropriate action. Parole officers will follow-up with service providers to ensure that offenders are routinely participating in required programs.

Community wellness (assessed monthly): Community wellness meetings will address community concerns about parole and will be spearheaded by local ministries and other community organizations who wish to participate. Parole Board members will also attend. The idea is to encourage community participation in the reintegration of offenders by dispelling myths about offenders and addressing community concerns about crime and other issues in a constructive and organized fashion.

Specific Method of Goal Measurement: Surveys will be provided to community members who attend meetings to discern what issues are of concern, to measure fear of crime in the neighborhood, issues related to public safety, and to determine community commitment to participation in this program. Follow-up surveys will be taken at subsequent meetings and will be utilized to measure change in concerns/attitude over time. The location of these meetings will be determined by geo-coding ReEntry offender residences and developing geographic boundaries.

Increased public safety (assessed monthly): One of our primary goals is to increase public safety through increased supervision and comprehensive treatment of serious and violent offenders. We believe that communities will be and feel safer through participation in this initiative.

Specific Method of Goal Measurement: Please see above description.

Decrease in fear/increased sense of justice on the part of the community (assessed monthly): Decreases in fear of crime often result in increases in a sense of justice and an increased sense of community wellness. These goals are in turn linked to reductions in violent crime and increased community wellness.

Specific Method of Goal Measurement: Please see above description.

Encourage offenders to become productive and responsible citizens (assessed monthly): We believe that the comprehensive menu of services that we will be able to offer juvenile and adult offenders will increase offenders' ability to become productive and responsible citizens. More people with more jobs and job skills will result in more people paying taxes and contributing to the infrastructure of the community.

Specific Method of Goal Measurement: Program participation and outcome will be tracked by the individual program and treatment providers and by the MDTs through the case-conference meetings that will be held bi-weekly. Benchmarks such as program and treatment completion, getting a job, and remaining crime free will be measures related to successful reintegration into the community.

Actively address substance abuse and mental health needs (assessed monthly): A large proportion of juvenile and adult serious and violent offenders present with some sort of substance abuse or mental health problem, therefore making effective provision of these services critical. Community participation in addressing the link between substance abuse, mental health issues, and crime is paramount to our success.

Specific Method of Goal Measurement: Please see above description.

SELECT TARGET POPULATIONS/HIGH-RISK OFFENDERS (See Attachment 1)

As described above, all of the adult offenders chosen for this initiative will have release dates (in the case of offenders sentenced under NERA) or parole dates or parole eligibility dates between October, 2003 and April, 2004. Offenders in this initiative will have lengthy parole trials (3 or 5 years in the case of offenders sentenced under NERA and at least a one year parole trial for offenders released by Board decision to parole), so that we are able to assess offender progress for a significant portion of the grant period. All adult offenders were selected based on a set of inclusion criteria included below.

- Adult offenders must be returning to Camden or Essex counties.
- Adult offenders are between the ages of 18-35
- Adult offenders must be released to parole between October, 2003 –April, 2004 (the 'recruitment period')

- Adult offenders have been sentenced to between 4 and 20 years
- Offenders from Special Treatment Centers will not be eligible to participate.
- To meet the **SERIOUS AND VIOLENT STANDARD**, adult offenders' criminal history should include **AT LEAST ONE** crime against persons. For the purposes of this program, crimes against persons include the following:

Murder	Aggravated Criminal Sexual
Contact	
Manslaughter	Arson
Aggravated Manslaughter	Robbery
Simple Assault	Carjacking
Aggravated Assault	Endangering the Welfare of a Child
Terroristic Threats	Unlawful Possession of a Weapon
Stalking	Rape
Kidnapping	Harassment
Aggravated Sexual Assault	Armed Burglary
	Sexual Assault

- If the **SERIOUS AND VIOLENT STANDARD** cannot be met, all offenders who have committed multiple crimes against property that suggest an increase in severity over time **AND** who have violated probation or parole are eligible to participate.
- Adult offenders who have committed **ONLY ONE** crime against property will be excluded.
- Adult offenders who have **ONLY** committed drug crimes (manufacture, distribute, dispense) even if there are multiple drug crime convictions will be excluded.
- Adult offenders who have committed **ONLY ONE** crime against a person will be included.

As mentioned above, our program is predicated on the carrot-stick approach. Offenders who meet the above and are paroled from October, 2003 to April, 2004 will participate in the ReEntry initiative as a special condition of their parole. Through notification sessions, offenders will be told of the opportunities that are available to them. They will also be told that should they fail to participate in ReEntry or commit a new crime, prosecution will be swift and certain.

**DETERMINE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY/DECISION-MAKERS
(See Attachment 2)**

All of the decision-makers noted below have equal decision-making authority. They are all routinely asked to join in meetings related to the development and implementation of this program. In Essex County, local and state agencies have come together under the auspices of the Greater Newark Safer Cities Initiative and meet regularly amongst themselves. We are in the process of bringing these same operatives together in Camden County.

Head of local substance abuse agency
Head of local mental health agency
Heads of local faith-based and community-based organizations
Chief elected official(s) in area(s) being served
Chief judge(s) of local community judiciary
Head of local community corrections agency
Chief law-enforcement officer(s) representing the local community(s)
Chair of local Workforce Investment Board
Head of local education agency
School superintendent and/or official of a local college
Head of local evaluation agency or appropriate evaluator
County Youth Services Commission Administrator

At the state level, all of the following agencies are asked to join together to participate in the development and implementation of this program.

Head of State adult or juvenile correctional agency
Head of State parole board
Head of state substance abuse treatment agency
Head of state mental health agency
Head of state education agency
Head of state agency charged with criminal justice system evaluations
Head of state Workforce Investment Board
Heads of faith-based, community-based, or other service organizations
Head of Victims of Crime Compensation Board

Everyone at the local and state levels who participates in this program is given equal decision-making authority. Currently, we are in the process of developing and formalizing MOUs with local substance abuse, mental health, faith-based, labor, and education agencies. We are also seeking to reinforce our partnerships with victims of crime and offenders' families.

INSTITUTIONALLY-BASED PROGRAMS: TRANSITION TEAM

(See Attachment 3)

The adult MDTs will be comprised of representatives from parole, substance abuse, mental health, and other treatment and service agencies as deemed appropriate. The number of MDT members will not exceed eight. The caseload manager will be designated on a rotating case-by-case basis. Our purpose in doing this was to give each agency/organization representative to take the lead in managing a case. We felt that designating one case manager would detract from the breadth and depth of knowledge that others might bring to the job. We also did not want to designate the parole officer as the case manager because we feel that this places too much emphasis on law enforcement and not enough emphasis on other needed services and functions. However, in the end, the onus of responsibility for ensuring that the offender participates in predetermined programs and services will fall to the parole officer since participation in ReEntry is a special condition of parole.

INSTITUTIONALLY-BASED PROGRAMS: INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMS/SERVICES (See Attachment 4)

As we are serving a relatively small number of adult offenders over the life of the grant, the NJDOC has agreed that offenders who are not currently taking part in programs will either be given priority to take part in programs in their current institutions, or will be moved to other institutions that provide the programs they require. Long-term ReEntry sustainability plans include a critical assessment of program offerings by NJDOC to determine what programs are most effective. Furthermore, comprehensive changes to the discharge planning process are underway so that we may implement a seamless method of offender discharge, beginning when the offender walks in the front door, and continuing as they are released. As mentioned previously, we have expanded the institutional phase of our initiative so that we may adequately and appropriately assess offenders for risk and need and provide comprehensive case management.

COMMUNITY-BASED TRANSITION: REENTRY AUTHORITY (See Attachment 5)

Our hope is that offender's will see the benefit these programs provide to themselves and to their families and will be encouraged to attend. The offender's case manager will be the first line of defense in encouraging the offender to participate, but ultimately it will fall to the parole officer to enforce the conditions of parole. The parole officer is the conduit through which the MDT will have the authority to enforce the conditions of an offender's reentry plan. Should an offender not comply with the conditions set forth by his/her parole officer, they will be in violation of their parole and the parole officer will be able to take the necessary steps to remediate an offender's behavior.

Offenders will be asked to account for their behavior through attending accountability sessions—meetings that take place in the community and that are chaired by the Chairman of the Parole Board or a Parole Board member. These meetings give offender's the opportunity to discuss their progress and to address concerns and give the Chairman or designee the opportunity to assess offender participation. Family is encouraged to attend.

COMMUNITY-BASED TRANSITION: CONTINUUM OF SERVICES **(See Attachment 6)**

Meeting adult offender's housing needs will be challenging. We have identified several shelters and privately-owned rooming houses that currently cater to the population in question. We are currently working with several community corrections agencies to leverage space in their facilities to use for placement cases and others who may require different housing needs. A support network of halfway houses, shelters, and SROs currently exists. We plan to expand this so that by the end of the grant period, a more comprehensive system is in place.

Several offenders in our cohort suffer from co-occurring disorders. We plan to approach treatment of these disorders through cross-training staff in substance abuse and mental health. Our plan is to develop a core group of treatment specialists who are qualified to deal with co-occurring disorders and who will be able to treat these individuals statewide.

We are planning to implement a chaplaincy program that begins while the offender is still incarcerated and continues once the offender is released into the community. Faith-based mentors will go to institutions where ReEntry participants will reside and begin to help prepare these individuals for release. Once the offender is released, the faith-based mentorship program will continue their work with the offender out in the community, providing spiritual and basic mentorship guidance to those who request it. Ultimately, our plans are to expand the chaplaincy program to all facilities statewide—this is part of the sustainability phase of our program.

The Department of Labor (DOL) is one of our strongest partners in this initiative. They are currently training Offender Specialists to assist us in streamlining job skills/placement for offenders who participate in this program. We are working closely with DOL at the state level, and the local WIBs in Camden and Essex Counties in this regard. Furthermore, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) has agreed to work with us in helping our disabled offenders in learning marketable skills that will result in offenders getting and maintaining jobs.

COMMUNITY-BASED LONG TERM SUPPORT: SELF-SUFFICIENCY PLANNING (See Attachment 7)

We view this grant as the opportunity to implement long-needed fundamental changes in the way that discharge planning and offender ReEntry functions in the State of New Jersey. The hiring of three discharge planners who will collaborate with institutional parole counselors and the multi-disciplinary teams in the community to develop comprehensive case management plans will be just the beginning. NJDOC and the New Jersey State Parole Board (NJSPB) plan to develop a comprehensive discharge planning mechanism that will be firmly in place by the expiration of the grant period. Furthermore, by the time grant funds have expired, NJDOC and NJSPB will have firmly in place a comprehensive risk/needs assessment model to evaluate offenders at entry into the system, periodically during their period of incarceration, and prior to parole release. This risk assessment will reassess change over time and will help the discharge planners, parole counselors, and MDTs facilitate a case management plan. These assessments will also provide added benefit to Board members when they are making decisions regarding parole release.

We currently have in place a Mutual Assistance Program that is an inpatient drug program. This program is a joint collaboration between Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), NJDOC, and NJSPB. We plan to build upon this relationship to provide staff who are cross-trained to work with offenders who may suffer from co-occurring disorders and who require intensive treatment. Furthermore, many treatment staff are not adequately trained to handle particularly serious and/or violent offenders. We believe that continued collaboration between agencies will result in more well-rounded and qualified treatment providers that will provide better care to our population.

Substance abuse and crime prevention will be an extremely important component of the sustainability phase of our program. The Governor's Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse and the Division of Addiction Services has agreed to partner with us to develop so curricula that speak directly to this population and their families/friends/support networks.

COMMUNITY-BASED LONG TERM SUPPORT: ORGANIZE PROJECT MANAGEMENT (See Attachment 8)

This may well be our biggest challenge. In the past, state agencies have been reluctant to work together and organizations at the local level have continually vied for what little resource dollars were available from the state. Recently, agencies and organizations at all levels have come to realize that collaboration and partnership are the only ways in which we will be able to combat what we all perceive to be our biggest problem: increased numbers of offenders who are returning to communities with little or no treatment and service support thereby increasing the likelihood of recidivism or the commission of new crime. Moreover, many of the agencies coming to the table are beginning to realize that 'their population' is our population. We have determined that critical to securing

interagency participation is establishing an awareness of how ‘the’ problem is everyone’s problem.

This grant is one of the first opportunities that agencies and organizations at the state and local level have had to come together to try to combat this problem. The Greater Newark Safer Cities Initiative has had some level of success at the local level, and we plan to learn from their successes and failures as we move forward under this grant. We believe that by the end of the grant period, many of the large, cumbersome issues related to ironing out our differences in attitude, perception, and operation will have been resolved, and that we will have a ReEntry protocol that will be intrinsic to the way our agencies and organizations operate.

DEVELOP PROJECT BUDGET: SUSTAINABILITY

We plan to utilize Rutgers University to conduct our program and process evaluations. We believe that our affiliation with Rutgers (the genesis of the Greater Newark Safer Cities Initiative) provides us with the academic rigor and integrity that will be required to conduct an evaluation that is reliable and valid. Furthermore, because of the relationship between Rutgers and GNSCI, evaluators will be intimately familiar with program function and purpose.